

after year when the Republicans didn't care about the budget deficit. They voted for hundreds of billions of dollars in spending for a war that I know the Presiding Officer and I both voted against that was not paid for. They voted for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans that were not paid for. They voted for a giveaway to the drug and insurance companies—a bailout—in the name of Medicare privatization that was not paid for. Again, they voted for these huge government expenditures and charged it to our grandchildren and said it was OK. But now that it is the unemployed middle-class, working Americans who are laid off, they think we cannot do this because of the budget deficit.

What are their priorities of the Republican Senators who voted against the unemployment extension? They were willing to charge it to our grandchildren to fight the war in Iraq, they are willing to bail out the drug and insurance companies, and they were willing to charge it to our grandchildren when it came to tax cuts for the richest Americans. When it came to workers losing their jobs, they are not willing to move forward and help them. It is amazing.

The last letter comes from Jeff from Butler County, a conservative county north of Cincinnati in southwest Ohio, one of the most conservative counties in Ohio.

I worked at my job for 36 years till my employer shut down our plant recently.

All those years I paid into unemployment.

While I'd prefer to have a job and earn a decent wage, I now need unemployment benefits until that happens.

Think of the big picture. The people paying into the system should be the first to receive benefits.

Jeff is right. He understands that he paid into unemployment for 36 years, and now Republican Senators won't let him draw from that fund. I just don't get it when I think of what this does to people.

I guess I will close with this: I wish the Senators who voted no—and there are 41—on the extension of unemployment—we have had several votes and continue to fall 1 or 2 votes short—I wish they would sit down with a family and listen to them, not respond but listen to a family where workers lost their jobs; listen to the woman talking about losing health care, when she talks about telling her children that they are going to have their home foreclosed on and what are they going to do; explain to their children—they have teenage children, say—explain to them that Mom and Dad lost their jobs and their insurance, and now they have to move out of their house because they cannot afford it.

The children may ask: Where are we going to move?

They would say: We don't know that yet.

What school are we going to go to?

We don't know that yet.

That is why I come to the floor and read letters from people in Ohio. I wish

Senators would listen to people in their States. We get a lot of mail. We come across a lot of numbers and statistics. I wish they would pick up some of the letters they get. I know Senators all over this country are getting letters like this. There are very few States—maybe energy States or heavy agricultural States—that haven't been afflicted with unemployment the way California, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Florida, and so many States have. Maybe they don't understand. But those Senators from States that have high unemployment—and that is most of the country—I wish they would read their letters and hear what people are saying.

We are going to try again this week. I ask my colleagues to vote to extend unemployment benefits. It is morally the right thing to do in terms of economic policy. It is the right policy, and we should not wait any longer.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, on Monday evening I came to the floor and spoke from the heart about my friend Senator Robert Byrd. I wanted to take the opportunity to submit a more comprehensive statement about Senator Byrd and his legacy.

As I looked at his empty desk with flowers on it, I thought back to last summer when we lost another giant, Senator Ted Kennedy. And what distinguishes Senator Byrd, like Senator Kennedy, from others was his unbelievable, never-ending commitment to the people he represented and to this country.

It was never a question of Senator Byrd's length of service—though his was exceptional but rather his fierce sense of fighting for West Virginians. As he told the New York Times in 2005, "I'm proud I gave hope to my people."

Senator Byrd was, of course, the Nation's longest-serving Senator. And he was a legend, for sure. When I came to here, I learned firsthand that he always met with the incoming Senators, to give them an introduction to the rules of the road, the procedures and dignity of the Senate, and to share his rev-

erence for the Constitution. The image that I will always have of Robert C. Byrd is him reaching inside his suit pocket and bringing out the Constitution, which along with the Bible was what he cherished most.

Senator Byrd was a giant in the Senate and a champion for America's working families. We will miss his eloquence, his sharp intellect, and his passionate oratory.

He was one of our Nation's foremost historians of the Senate. He literally wrote the book on the Senate, a four-volume history. And he was not only an expert on the rules of the Senate, he was a fierce defender of its traditions and its role in our democracy.

Senator Byrd fought to make sure every American had a chance to live the American dream because he lived the American dream.

He was born in coal country in southern West Virginia, the youngest of five children. His mother died before he was a year old, and he was raised by his aunt and uncle on a farm with no telephone, electricity or running water.

He went on to graduate first in his high school class and married his high school sweetheart, Erma, to whom he was devoted throughout their 68 years of marriage until her death in 2006. To support his wife and two daughters in the early years, he worked as a gas station attendant, a grocery store clerk and as a welder in a shipyard during World War II.

A naturally gifted speaker, he was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1946 and to the West Virginia Senate in 1950. He won a seat in Congress in 1952 and his U.S. Senate seat 6 years later. He had such a passion for education that he remains the only American ever to earn a law degree while serving in Congress. President John F. Kennedy presented it to him at American University in 1963.

His career in Congress spanned 12 presidencies, and he cast more 18,500 votes in the Senate. He was Senate majority leader, chairman of the Appropriations Committee and President pro tempore of the Senate. He fought every day to make life better for the people of West Virginia and for all Americans.

I can tell you, Mr. President, coming from the largest State in the Union, we have had our share of problems. We have had floods and fires and droughts and pests. And every single time, after every earthquake or storm or other disaster, Senator FEINSTEIN and I came to our colleagues to say that California needed the help of the U.S. government.

Every time we needed assistance, Senator Byrd, as the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, opened his doors and his heart to us, sharing his experiences and helping us in all of these cases when we were so in need. I am sure many of my colleagues can recount similar experiences. He was always there for us.

And I remember so well his leadership in trying to bring the troops home